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BecauseWeCare

Healthy Ideas For A Healthy Workplace



A Healthy State of Mind

You probably know Rosalynn Carter as the First Lady to the 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter. What you may not know about her is that for the past 30 years, she has been an active advocate for mental health issues.

Now working through the Carter Center's Mental Health Program, her efforts focus on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, establishing mental health insurance coverage equal to that available for medical care, promoting prevention and early intervention for children and families, and raising public awareness about mental health issues.

"The stigma is beginning to lift a little. When I began working in this field, people wouldn't say the words out loud if a family member was suffering from mental illness," she says. "Now it's in the news, it's being talked about, and more people are going for treatment than ever before."

Mrs. Carter points out that advances in science and medicine have greatly improved the outlook for patients. "With what we know now through research and better understanding of the brain, we have better diagnosis and treatments so that 90% of people with mental illnesses can recover and live normal lives. They might have to take medications to keep them healthy, but that's no different from people with other diseases."

"There should be no shame or embarrassment associated with mental illness because it's part of our biological make-up. In fact, with so many effective treatments available, we need to empower people by educating them and giving them hope for recovery."

Although Mrs. Carter is concerned about the future of funding for providing treatment and other services, she is encouraged that mental health is being recognized more and more as an integral part of overall physical health. She says, "There should be no shame or embarrassment associated with mental illness because it's part of our biological make-up. In fact, with so many effective treatments available, we need to empower people by educating them and giving them hope for recovery."

For information on activities and programs at the Carter Center, please visit www.cartercenter.org. -Jeff Silver

Give Your Brain a Boost

Leading a healthy life means keeping your body – and your brain – in shape. Thinking creatively and learning new skills stimulates your brain and keeps it healthy. Here are some exercises to get your mind on the move:

Play games. Choose games of strategy such as chess, or word games like crossword puzzles or Scrabble.

Don't use a calculator. Do the math by hand when you balance your checkbook or figure tips at restaurants.

Switch it up. Try drawing, writing, or even brushing your teeth with the opposite hand.

Read riddles. This makes a great family activity at the dinner table. Take turns reading a riddle aloud to each other and see if anyone can solve it by the end of the meal.

Take a class. Many community colleges offer affordable classes on all kinds of interesting subjects.

Drink water. Water is essential for keeping every organ in your body working properly, and that includes your brain.

Exercise – You Can Fit it into Your Busy Life!

If you think you're too busy to exercise every day – try a different approach! Studies have proven that splitting up your exercise into 10-minute intervals throughout the day can be just as beneficial as one 30- to 40-minute session.

The key is to set aside time for each “mini” interval and to get your heart rate up for the duration of the exercise. Some options for 10-minute intervals to consider include:

- A brisk walk on your break with a co-worker
- Jumping rope
- Dancing
- Climbing stairs
- Riding a bike
- Jogging around the block with your dog

Remember that the best exercise is an activity that you enjoy doing and that you can do on a daily basis. By breaking up your exercise routine into intervals there's no excuse why you can't fit it in every day!

Couch Potato No More!



If your idea of exercise is “feeling the burn” when searching for the remote control, then you officially qualify as a couch potato. Here are a few easy tips to help any couch potato get up and get moving:

- If you simply must eat while watching television, snack on fruits or vegetables. Add a low-fat dip as an incentive.
- Not every television show is an Emmy Award-winner. When a clunker comes on, get up and walk a lap or two around the block.
- Buy a one- or two-pound hand weight – or use a can of vegetables – to tone your arms and shoulders while watching the evening news.
- Sit-ups and push-ups can also be performed without missing the plot of the show.
- Join a health club. Mingling with real people is so much more stimulating than the “reality” shows you'll find in prime time.



CLICK HERE to find an American Cancer Society Relay For Life® event in your area. This fun overnight walk is a great way to get off that couch and make a difference!



CLICK HERE for more easy exercise opportunities.

Moms, check this out!



Your family counts on you to be strong and healthy, and to help them be the same. That's why it's important to talk to your doctor about the early detection tests that are right for you and your loved ones. The American Cancer Society's Great American Health Check, a new online program made possible by MetLife, can help you determine which tests you need and give you a personal action plan full of tips on reducing your cancer risk and talking to your doctor about early detection. Just log on to www.cancer.org and answer a few simple questions! It only takes a few minutes, and it could save your life.



CLICK HERE to take the Great American Health Check.

Delving Into Your Daily Grinds

Many of us feel irritable, groggy, and downright useless without our daily dose of caffeine. In fact, the average American adult consumes more than 10 pounds of coffee a year. But is all that coffee consumption really good for the body? For decades, the health effects of coffee have been greatly debated. While caffeine does provide some mild benefits, such as increased alertness and a possible reduction in the risk of developing kidney stones and gallstones, there are still many detrimental effects to overindulging. So before you reach for another cup of Joe, here are some things you should know:

- Women who drink caffeinated products tend to have less bone density than non-caffeine drinkers. This may increase the risk of osteoporosis.
- Caffeine increases secretion of stomach acid, which is bad news for people with acidity symptoms or stomach ulcers.
- Caffeine can aggravate insomnia.
- Women who drink more than four cups of coffee a day have twice the risk



of urinary incontinence compared with women who drink little or no coffee.

- Caffeine withdrawal can produce unpleasant headaches and shakiness.
- Coffee pumps up our stress hormones, and can cause a rise in blood pressure and symptoms of anxiety.

Many experts advise limiting caffeine intake to about two cups of strong brewed coffee a day. To avoid experiencing withdrawal symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, and depression, gradually cut the amount of coffee you drink over a period of days or even weeks and drink plenty of water to keep your body well hydrated. Replace some of your cups of coffee with vegetable juices or decaffeinated tea for an energy boost without the negative side effects of caffeine.

Get Up and Get Started!

If you want to get in shape but have never broken a sweat, your first exercise should be to pick up the phone and make an appointment for a physical, especially if you have obvious health problems, are pregnant, or are overweight.

Some tips for those new to exercise include:

- Choose an exercise or activity you enjoy.
- To avoid injury, stretch before exercising.
- For motivation, exercise with a friend or group.
- With any exercise, start slowly and increase your time as you build stamina.
- Remember, gardening, dancing and taking the stairs instead of the elevator are great exercises. Use your imagination.
- Join a health club. A professional trainer can develop a program to meet your fitness level and goals.

Enjoy the Sun – But Don't Get Burned!



Avoiding the risk of skin cancer means more than giving up sunbathing as your favorite pastime. You need to learn how to live and work safely in the sun on a daily basis. Here are some important facts to remember about sun safety.

Protect yourself. Unprotected or excessive exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays puts you at risk for developing skin cancer. Limit or avoid exposure to UV rays during the midday hours, when the sun's harmful rays are strongest. Do not use sun lamps or tanning beds, which are artificial sources of UV light.

Protect your children. Young children are especially susceptible to the sun's harmful rays. Early childhood sunburns have been shown to cause skin cancer later in life. Cover your children properly when they play

outdoors and use SPF 15 or higher sunscreen.

Practice Slip! Slop! Slap!® guidelines. These guidelines are the best way to live safely in the sun. Slip! on a shirt, Slop! on sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher), and Slap! on a hat. Sunglasses are also important and will protect your eyes from UV rays.



CLICK HERE for more ways to play it cool in the sun.

Will a CHERRY a DAY Keep the Doctor Away?

Most people think of cherries as a decadent fruit better suited for sugary desserts than healthy diets. But research is showing that tart cherries may help reduce risk of all kinds of diseases, including cancer.

Pain relief. Cherries are known to contain effective anthocyanins, which are anti-inflammatory pain relievers 10 times stronger than aspirin or ibuprofen. Eating cherries or drinking tart cherry juice could help reduce the pain of arthritis, gout, and even headaches.

All-purpose medicine. Cherries are linked to many healing properties. They have been found to help people with kidney stones, gallbladder problems, tooth decay, varicose veins, and even minor sleep disorders. They have also been linked to helping lower cholesterol and reducing the risk of heart attack and cancer.



Store unwashed cherries in a plastic bag in the refrigerator, and don't wash until just before eating. Allow cherries to sit out for a few hours before eating; their flavor is much better at room temperature. Fresh cherries should be consumed within two to four days.

2 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice*
3 cups pitted dark sweet cherries, drained (fresh, frozen, or canned)
3 cups Royal Anne white cherries, drained (fresh, frozen, or canned)
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
2 tablespoons sugar
1 cup low-fat cream cheese
4 cups plus 1/2 cup fat-free whipped topping, divided
Mint sprigs

Dissolve cornstarch in lemon juice.

In a large saucepan, mix together cornstarch mixture, cherries, corn syrup, and sugar. Bring to a boil and simmer until thickened, approximately three to five minutes, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and cool completely.

Beat together cream cheese and 4 cups of whipped topping until combined.

In parfait glasses, layer cream cheese mixture with cherry mixture twice, ending with cherries on top.

Top each with a dollop of whipped topping and garnish with mint sprigs.

Serves 8.

*The acidic lemon juice prevents the cherries in this dish from becoming tinged with blue.

Approximate per serving: 340 calories, 8 grams of fat



CLICK HERE to order *Celebrate! Healthy Entertaining for Any Occasion*.

In The Next Issue

- **Pets: Nature's Tension Tamers**
- **Pack a Healthy Summer Picnic**
- **Punch Up Your Workout with Pilates**

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Photo of Mrs. Carter by Rick Diamond

All content for BecauseWeCare is provided by the American Cancer Society.

Meeting the growing consumer and employee demands for increased health services on the job, the American Cancer Society Workplace Services program provides corporate tools and resources to initiate or enhance existing employee health and wellness services.

For more information contained in this newsletter, to sign up for the newsletter, or to find out more about American Cancer Society programs, services, and upcoming events, please call 1.800.ACS.2345 or visit www.cancer.org.